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ABSTRACT

One hundred ninety-seven pupils from fourth, fifth, and sixth grades were studied to determine the relationship between children's self-concept, academic achievement, and teacher's rating of children's self-concept. The differences between grade levels, sex, and ethnic group membership were tested by analysis of variance. Significant correlations were found between child's self-concepts and child's academic achievement. Significant ethnic group differences were found in self-concept, academic achievement, and teacher's rating of self-concept in this study, with interethnic groups showing the higher scores. (Author)

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHILDREN'S SELF-CONCEPTS, TEACHER'S RATING, AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

One hundred ninty-seven pupils from fourth, fifth, and sixth grades were studied to determine the relationship between children's self-concept, academic achievement, and teacher's rating of children's self-concept. The differences between grade levels, sex, and ethnic group membership were tested by analysis of variance.

Significant correlations were found between child's self-concept and teacher's rating of child's self-concepts, and between teacher's rating of child's self-concepts and child's academic achievement. Significant ethnic group differences were found in self-concept, academic achievement, and teacher's rating of self-concept in this study, with interethnic groups showing the higher scores.

Purposes and Background of Study

The purposes of this study were twofold: first, to investigate the relationship between the child's self-concept, teacher's rating of the child's self-concept, and the child's achievement levels; and second, to examine the differences between grade levels, sex and ethnic group membership on the three measures previously cited.

Although there have been numerous empirical studies related to self-concept, few studies have examined the relationship between the child's self-concept and teacher's rating of the child's self-concept. Coopersmith (1959) reported substantial agreement between the results of his Self-Esteem Inventory and his Behavior Rating Form. Greene and Zirkel (1971) and Alberti (1970) found teacher's rating of self-concept significantly correlated with the child's self-concept. Gustafson and Owens (1971) indicated that results of studies relating students' self-concepts to actual teacher evaluations are not consistent.

Considerable research has been concerned with the relationship between self-concept and academic achievement. The results of these studies have indicated contrasting findings. Some studies (Caplin, 1969; Cummings, 1971; Lamy, 1965; Williams & Cole, 1968) have found significant relationships between self-concept and academic achievement, while other studies (Badwal, 1969; Beebe, 1972; Green, 1971; LaBelle, 1970) have shown no significant relationships.

Procedures

The research sample included 197 students from the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades in a Mid-Western city. The subjects attended an elementary school where most of the children were from a low socio-economic background and approximately 30 percent of the children were from interethnic marriages.

The instrument used to measure the children's self-concepts was the Piers-Harris Children's Self-concept Scale (Piers, 1969). The scale is a self report instrument consisting of 80 first-person declarative statements to which the student responds either "yes" or "no". The investigator administered the self-concept scale to all the subjects during regular class time.

An adjective checklist was constructed by the investigator using 18 bipolar adjectives. The teachers were asked to mark in one of the five columns to indicate the degree to which each of their students was best described. This checklist was completed by the teachers without having seen the students' self-concept scores. In order to eliminate response set in one column on all items, positive and negative adjectives were randomly placed. The five columns were provided on a continuum scale. A numerical weight of 1 was assigned to the mark when placed in the first column next to the negative

adjective. The marks were then assigned numerical weights of 2, 3, 4, and 5 in the continuing scale, with the fifth mark being nearest to the positive adjective.

Reading and mathematics grade equivalent scores were obtained from the Metropolitan Achievement Test which had been administered to all the fourth, fifth, and sixth graders as part of the regular school curriculum.

Children from interethnic backgrounds were identified from their cumulative records and teacher interviews. Each teacher was asked to identify the children who had one foreign-born parent. Most of the foreign-born parents were from Asian countries.

Findings

Table 1 presents intercorrelations between four different measures. The data indicates a significant relationship between self-concept and teacher's rating of self-concept. Between reading and mathematics scores, a significat relationship is found. Also, teacher's rating of the child's self-concept is significantly related to achievement in reading and mathematics.

Table 1

Intercorrelations Among Variables for the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Grades

	Reading	Mathematics	Teacher's Rating
1. Self-concept	.07	.13	.67*
2. Reading		.65*	.33*
3. Mathematics			.33*
4. Teacher's Rating			

*Significant at .01 level

The results of analysis of variance technique showed significant differences between ethnic groups in self-concept, achievement, and teacher's rating. Table 2 presents means on measures of self-concept, academic achievement, and teacher's rating by grade, sex, and ethnic group. The children from interethnic marriages have significantly higher scores in the areas than the non-interethnic groups.

There were no significant differences between grade level and between sex on self-concept, academic achievement, and teacher's rating.

Table 2

Means on Measures of Self-concept, Achievement and Teacher's Rating

	Grade			Sex		Ethnic Group	
Variable	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth	Male	Female	Non-interethnic	Interethnic
Self-concept	53.72	55.46	56.49	56.65	53.80	52.21	58.24
Reading*	4.3	4.8	5.8	4.9	4.1	4.7	5.2
Math.*	4.2	4.7	5.7	4.9	4.9	4.6	5.1
Teacher's Rating	59.13	64.80	60.38	61.41	61.46	57.32	65.55

*Grade equivalent score

Discussion

Research concerned with self-concept has most frequently been studied in relation to academic achievement, ethnic group membership, and the child's self-concept. An important variable in the education setting that has often been overlooked is the teacher's rating of the child's self-concept.

This study found a significant relationship between the teacher's rating of the child's self-concept and the child's self-concept. This tends to suggest that the teacher could provide reliable information about a child if asked by the school or counselor to assist the child. Also, a significant correlation was found between the teacher's rating and academic achievement. The second research question dealt with grade levels, sex, and ethnic group membership. No significant differences were found in grade levels and sex. This indicates that these variables are not part of the child's or teacher's reference point when rating self-concept. The variable of ethnic group membership indicates that this factor is considered when rating self-concept.

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